

## CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

### A LETTER FROM ELIENE

Confession CLIX.

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I had a letter from Eliene this morning.

"Oh, dearest Margie," she writes, "if you could only see my boys!" (I note she already says "my boys.") "They are the sweetest things in all the world.

"They have great big brown eyes and Budge squints his up so funny when I hold him to the light. Toddy keeps his wide open with nary a blink. I call one of them Budge and the other Toddy after those delicious children that Habberton wrote about.

"I am the only one that can tell one of those blessed twins from the other, and, Margie, I am really happier than I ever was before in my life. Some women, Margie, were born to be mothers and some were only born to be wives. I'm the first kind, and, dear, it may seem queer to you, but these two babies seem exactly like my own. You can't tell who they will look like, although Budge's nurse insists they both look like me. This, of course, is rank flattery, but I do think they know me, and the 'feel' of their little wet mouths on my throat or against my cheek sends a thrill over me that never came to me when Harry was making love to me, not even when he proposed.

"I wish you could see them in their baths! I bathe them myself, while both nurses stand by in admiring idleness. They are so soft and satiny and fragrant and utterly helpless that I am almost overcome by my responsibility to them.

"Margie, these boys shall have their chance.

"Did you hear I went on to New York with him so that there should be no scandal? I did this for the babies' sake, not his. Harry Symone ought to get what's coming to him, and do you know, dear, I think he

is getting some of it now.

"Just before we got to New York he came in my drawing room and tried to talk to me—to tell me how sorry he was and how big he thought I was.

" 'Perhaps,' I said, 'other women are not so fond of babies as I am. Besides, Harry, I feel that I, as your wife, am in some way responsible for the fate of these children. When we were married, Harry, I took you for better or for worse—because it is worse is no reason why I should revoke my vow.'

"I wish you could have seen him, Mudge! Even I, who feel that he has outraged me beyond forgiveness, felt sorry for him. He has grown fifteen years older and the lines on his face are no longer laughing lines—they are the deep lines of remorse and pain. He thought he could pay for his pleasures in money. But he found that you must pay to the uttermost for every sin against another that you commit. And, Margie dear, I'm paying too. I guess I was not everything I might have been to Harry. My grief at not having children was too poignant. I let it poison all my waking hours; I did not pay much attention to Harry's likes and dislikes, and oftentimes I thought him vulgar and almost brutal because he either made fun of me or ignored my tears.

"It's a queer world, Margie. Here I sit with babies in my arms that another woman died to bring into the world as an earnest proof of her love for my husband. She paid by not being able to live for them, poor thing! I wonder if she knows that I forgive her freely and will love her babies, who are now mine, as well as she could. You see I don't believe that you have to bear children to love them utterly.

"Come down and see me bye and bye, Margie, and as the greatest favor